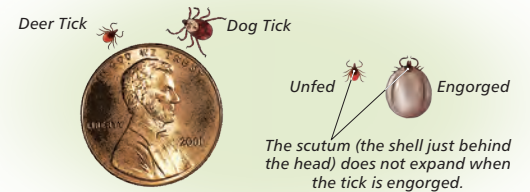
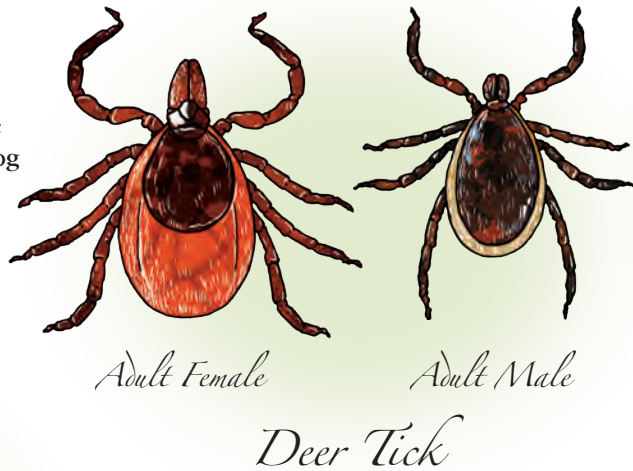
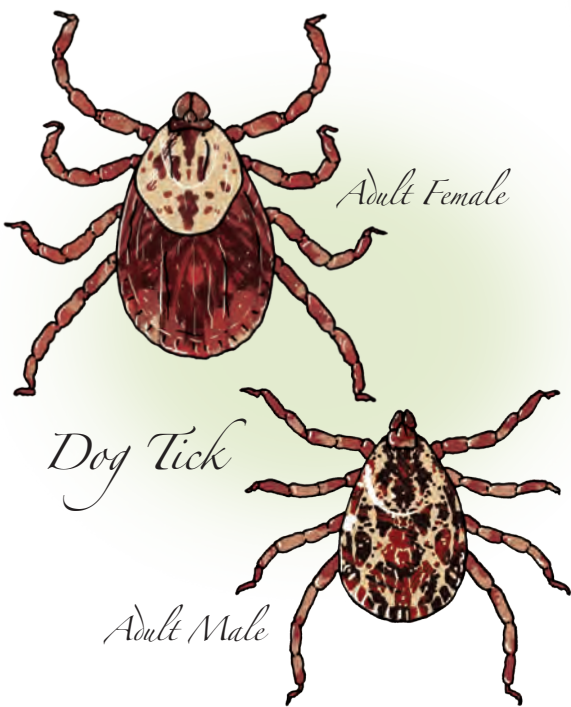


Lyme on the rise

Identification

Tick populations are on the rise all over the country. There are many species, but the two main ones in the Adirondacks are the dog tick and the deer tick. It is the deer tick that transmits Lyme disease to humans.



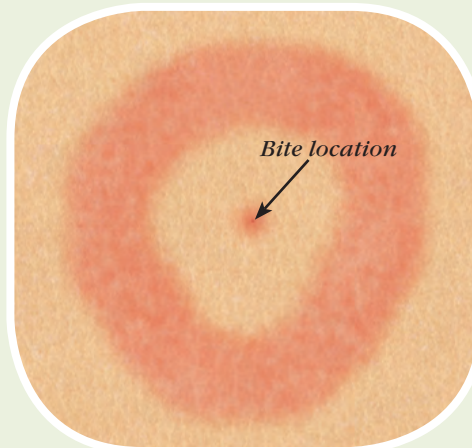
Above left: Deer tick and dog tick (actual size).
Above right: Female deer tick, unfed and engorged after feeding for 36-48 hours.

Deer ticks

The deer tick is smaller and therefore often harder to detect than the dog tick. Dog-tick bites are generally benign, but deer ticks can transmit Lyme disease.

Lyme

Lyme is a bacterial infection transmitted by a tick's saliva. Not all ticks carry the disease, so it is important to keep an eye on the bite area and watch for symptoms. Generally, it takes twenty-four hours to be transmitted, so the sooner you remove the tick, the smaller your chances of contracting Lyme. A telltale sign of infection (usually, but not always) is a circular bull's-eye rash spreading around the bite area.

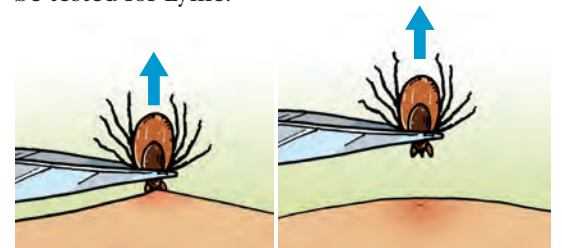


A bull's-eye rash typical of a Lyme infection.

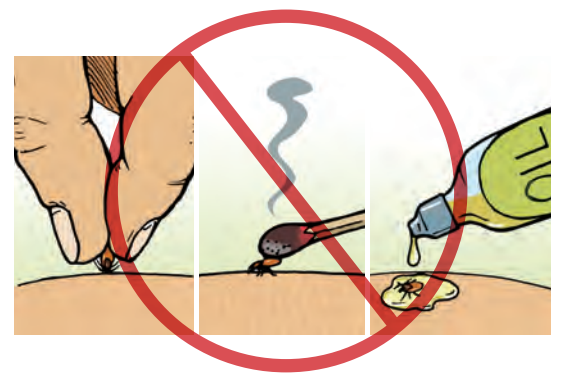
Read More: Lyme is just one of the diseases ticks can transmit to humans. For a comprehensive list, visit cdc.gov/ticks/diseases.

Removal

If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove it carefully with fine-tipped tweezers or a tick-removal tool. Do not use your fingers, and do not squeeze or crush it, as that can cause it to expel saliva into the wound. After removing the tick, clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water. Save the tick in a sealed bag or container so if you start developing symptoms, the tick can be tested for Lyme.



Grasp the tick close to the skin, just behind the head and pull firmly, straight up until it releases.



Don't use your fingers, and avoid "folk methods" such as removing a tick by burning it or dousing it in oil. These can increase your risk of disease.

Avoidance

Ticks hang out in long grass and leaves. Ticks can't jump or fly, but they will climb on you from below or drop on you from above. When hiking, avoid brushing long grass and overhanging branches. Wear long pants and long sleeves. Use a good tick repellent on your clothing and skin. Check yourself and your dog thoroughly when you get home. Use a mirror or enlist a helper to check hard-to-see areas.

